DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 338 165 HE 025 007

AUTHOR	Wechsler, Harold
TITLE	Meeting the Transfer Challenge: Five Partnerships and Their Model. The Report of the Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer.
INSTITUTION	Association of American Colleges, Washington, D.C.; Vassar Coll., Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, N.Y.; Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Aug 91
NOTE	42p.; Funding also received from the AT&T Foundation.
AVAILABLE FROM	Association of American Colleges, 1818 R Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	College Students; *College Transfer Students; Community Colleges; Comparative Analysis; Enrollment; General Education; Higher Education; *Intercollegiate Cooperation; Liberal Arts; *Minority Groups; Program Development; Program Evaluation; *Student Recruitment; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

This report describes and assesses the experiences of five two-year/four-year institutional partnerships (eight community colleges with five independent liberal arts institutions) that were undertaken to encourage community college students, especially minorities and educationally disadvantaged students, to pursue baccalaureate degrees at independent liberal arts institutions. The partnership's methodology is based on an adaptation of the Vassar summer program model to their institutional settings. The report includes candid summaries of each program contributed by representatives of each participating four-year college. The summaries are followed by a synthesis that may be helpful to the indicators of similar experiments. Results from the five projects confirm an earlier Association of American Colleges report assessment that success in enrolling minorities from two- to four-year institutions requires commitment, comprehensiveness, and institutionalism. It is shown that summer residential programs create new constituencies for four-year colleges, and have many spin-off benefits: increased communication within and between the four-year and two-year college communities; creation of innovative courses; improvement of support services to minority students; and clarification of the four-year college curriculum. (GLR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED338165

MEETING THE TRANSFER CHALLENGE:
FIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR MODEL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE REPORT OF THE VASSAR/AAC NATIONAL PROJECT
ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN **OTHER THAN PAPER COPY** HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

AAC

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HE 025 017

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MEETING THE TRANSFER CHALLENGE:
FIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR MODEL

THE REPORT OF THE VASSAR/AAC NATIONAL PROJECT ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

Written and edited by

Harold Wechsler
Graduate School of Education and Human Development
University of Rochester

Published, August, 1991
Vassar College/ The Association of American Colleges

Foreword

Any contemporary discussion of increasing access to American higher education is incomplete without a thorough consideration of the extraordinarily diverse community college populations and what happens to them in what has come to be known as the transfer function. Recognizing this fact, Vassar College and the Association of American Colleges have undertaken a series of initiatives to encourage community college students, especially minorities and educationally disadvantaged students, to pursue baccalaureate degrees at independent liberal arts institutions.

In *Meeting the Transfer Challenge*, the student and historian of higher education Harold Wechsler describes how five partnerships of two- and four-year institutions set about adapting 'Exploring Transfer,' a nationally-recognized summer program for community college students pioneered by Vassar, LaGuardia Community College and other New York community colleges over the past seven years. This project report builds upon and tests the assumptions and recommendations contained in the 1989 AAC report, *The Transfer Challenge: Removing Barriers, Maintaining Commitment*, a handbook for four-year institutions interested in increasing the flow of community college students to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

We wish to thank the officers and trustees, both past and present, of the Ford Foundation for their generous support of this project, which received additional funding from the AT&T Foundation and from Chase Manhattan Bank. We are grateful for the assistance of a number of Vassar and LaGuardia students, teachers and staff. We also wish to acknowledge the dedication and contributions of the many campus-based project personnel who worked tirelessly to bring these adaptation programs to life. They and the participating community college students are the true heroes of the story told here.

Colton Johnson
Dean of Studies
Vassar College

Jane R. Spalding
Associate Director of Programs
Association of American Colleges

THE VASSAR/AAC NATIONAL PROJECT ON COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER

The Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer is helping to reverse an ominous trend: the decline in the proportion of community college students who continue their education at four-year liberal arts colleges. Vocationalization of two-year colleges often results in a diminution of resources available to liberal arts faculty members and students. The indifference of four-year colleges often results in artificial barriers —academic, economic, geographical—placed in the way of two-year liberal arts students who aspire to transfer. The growing proportion of minority students who attend two-year colleges gives greater urgency to the need to reinvigorate the community college transfer function.

During the past decade, administrators, faculty members, foundation and government officials have called for cooperation between two- and four-year colleges to facilitate transfer. Experiments funded by the Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer and by other sources provide two- and four-year colleges with a range of opportunities and with candid evaluations of the innovations undertaken during the past decade. *The Transfer Challenge*, a recent AAC report, identified three factors that determined program success or failure:

- **Commitment.** Leaders at both four-year and two-year colleges had to recognize the importance of transfer to their students and their institutions. Commitment had to begin at the top. Faculty members and administrators who initiated and implemented reform then would be secure in the knowledge that the institution stood behind them. Initiatives not based on such commitment went nowhere.
- **Comprehensiveness.** Initiatives taken in one area usually had far-reaching effects. Improved counseling, for instance, might affect faculty members, financial aid, staff members, and other students. Successful transfer programs considered all potential effects of their initiatives. Strong, committed leaders facilitated an integrated program.
- **Institutionalization.** Informal relationships are necessary to initiate reforms. But perpetuating reforms requires their institutionalization. When key faculty members or administrators changed positions—which happened often—entire initiatives were jeopardized. Conversely, institutionalization permitted the

emergence of new personal relationships.

The AAC report showed that the Vassar transfer project met these three key criteria. Building upon an ongoing relationship with LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, New York, Vassar established a comprehensive summer program for potential transfer students who completed their first year at one of five New York State community colleges. Vassar aimed its program primarily at minority students and appointed its adviser to minority students as project director.

The key barrier for students, *The Transfer Challenge* noted, was not the academic barrier noted in other reports on enhancing transfer, but the belief that schools like Vassar "were not for them." Vassar officials believed that the partner colleges enrolled minority students who could adjust to study and social life at a selective residential college. The officials wished to demonstrate to these students that admission to and successful completion of a degree program were realistic goals.

The comprehensive Vassar program—designed to give students an understanding of academic, social, and residential life at a selective college—offered a five-week residential summer study institute to a racially diverse group of potential transfer candidates—26 in the first year, double that number by the fifth year. Institute faculty members, drawn from Vassar and its two-year college partners, chose the participants from applicants who completed a year of work at a partner community college. Students and peer counselors—themselves transfer students—lived together in a dormitory on the Vassar campus. Support personnel included a writing specialist from the academic resource center, a specialist in study skills, an adviser from the microcomputer center, and admissions and financial aid counselors.

Faculty and staff members at the two-year colleges helped plan and implement the program and then designed and co-taught three courses that had the same range and scope as regular Vassar offerings. Each student selected two courses and received the equivalent of seven semester hours of academic credit. The partner colleges automatically accepted these credits towards the associate degree, and Vassar accepted these credits from the participants who ultimately transferred there. Students paid no tuition, but Vassar tried to recover state funds to which students were entitled.

Students expressed initial concern about living away from home and in the constant company of their peers. But the spirit of cooperation that developed between faculty members

carried over to the students. They soon formed collaborative study groups that helped them adjust to Vassar's more demanding academic requirements and its different social environment. Successful student adjustments helped convince two-year college faculty participants to raise their academic expectations. This transformed faculty outlook, program organizers assumed, would help to reduce the gap between student performance in two- and four-year college environments.

Vassar's full-time summer program made transfer a central institutional activity, not an additional project for already overburdened two- and four-year college administrators, faculty members, and students. Program organizers tried to channel the stress that students inevitably experienced by confronting student insecurities and fears, by reminding students of the program's purpose, and by describing the culture the institution was trying to foster. High levels of institutional and student commitment saw everyone through periods of cooperation and rebellion and ultimately translated into good transcripts, heightened self-esteem, and developed abilities. Most participants transferred to four-year colleges.

In 1988, the National Project on Community College Transfer organized a national conference that invited two- and four-year college representatives to learn more about transfer—the reasons for the salience of this issue and the opportunities and problems involved in undertaking new initiatives. Conference participants learned in particular about the Vassar program. At the end of the conference, AAC member colleges were invited to submit proposals for developing a transfer student constituency from partner community colleges by creating a summer residential program. The academic program would consist of team-taught courses that two- and four-year colleges would accept as meeting their degree requirements. The non-academic program would take advantage of the residential nature of the four-year college, and would emphasize support services, counseling, and mentorship.

Project representatives chose five proposals that demonstrated commitment to transfer and that offered a concrete, comprehensive program to attract new constituencies. Panelists favored proposals that saw the program as a service to the higher education community, rather than as a recruitment vehicle to the four-year college. The selecting panel also looked for the applicant's ability to raise matching funds—an indication that the program would be continued after the project grant ran out.

The five selected proposals showed promise of making creative local adaptations to the Vassar model. The successful independent four-year colleges included two women's colleges and three coeducational institutions. Three colleges were located in the northeast, one in the south, and one in the west. Two four-year colleges—Agnes Scott, and Lewis & Clark—were located in the same urban center as their two-year college partners. The three other four-year colleges—Bucknell, Hamilton, and Smith—were located at some remove. Three programs worked with a single two-year college partner. Agnes Scott had two collaborators and Hamilton worked with three institutions.

• **Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia, Atlanta Metropolitan College, Atlanta, Georgia, and DeKalb Community College, Decatur, Georgia.** Agnes Scott, a women's college, cooperated with DeKalb Community College, which enrolled 13,000 students on three campuses in Atlanta, and with Atlanta Metropolitan Community College. Six men—five black, one white—were admitted to the transfer program—a first for Agnes Scott. A course on racial tension, selected by most students, highlighted the program. The course helped diffuse racial tension present in the dorms during the early weeks of the program, and generate a high level of student bonding.

• **Bucknell University, Lewiston, Pennsylvania, and Community College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.** A complex admissions process that featured over 100 videotaped applicant interviews highlighted this program. The admissions committee identified motivated students who wanted to spend the summer at a college at a distance from Philadelphia. The well-developed bilateral relationship between Bucknell and CCP, substantial institutional support, and a strong "writing-across the curriculum" component contributed to the program's success.

• **Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, Mohawk Valley Community College, Utica, New York, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, and State University of New York, College of Agriculture and Technology at Morrisville, Morrisville, New York.** Hamilton worked with three two-year colleges but was still constrained by a small applicant pool. The resultant heterogeneous student body included four single parents and other students whose needs forced creative institutional responses.

• **Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon, and Portland Community College, Portland, Oregon.** This

program emphasized faculty development and interdisciplinary, critical inquiry courses that contained strong writing components. The student body—average age 31—included ten minority students. Peer counselors played a key role in anticipating and solving problems.

• **Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts and Greater Hartford Community College, Hartford, Connecticut.** The only interstate program, the Smith—Greater Hartford Community College partnership admitted only women. Student, faculty, and administrative enthusiasm sustained participants during periods of racial tension.

Together, these five groups allowed for examination of key variables: geography, especially distance between two- and four-year colleges, curricular variation, size of student body, effect on minority students, and number of community college partners.

This report includes candid summaries of each program contributed by representatives of each participating four-year college. The summaries are followed by a synthesis that may help initiators of similar experiments. The five projects ratify the key conclusion of the earlier AAC report—that success requires commitment, comprehensiveness, and institutionalization. But the AAC report also identified other programs that met these criteria. Here are nine key criteria that will help other committed institutions decide whether to use the summer residential program as a strategy for enhancing transfer:

- Willingness to devote substantial academic resources to program creation and implementation.
- Willingness of faculty members at the partner colleges to collaborate, especially to team-teach.
- High degree of central administration commitment to the program's success.
- Willingness of administrators at partner colleges to cooperate in planning, identify candidates for admission, facilitate the program while in progress and follow up on accepted and rejected students after the program.
- Thorough financial planning, including anticipating costs to the colleges and to students.
- Adequacy and availability of campus resources, including dormitories, language and computer labs, athletic facilities, and the library.
- Adequacy of the applicant pool. Are there nearby two-year colleges that contain academically-oriented students who would apply to this program?
- Availability of support personnel—especially transfer students who can serve as peer counselors—and resources to train these personnel.

- Ability to create, build upon, and sustain relationships with two-year college partners before, during, and after the summer program.
- Ability to sustain the program for several years.

Embarking on a transfer initiative, concluded *The Transfer Challenge*, required careful consideration and planning. A failed effort remains a part of the institutional memory for a long time and becomes an additional barrier to future endeavors. But, this project shows that summer residential programs create new constituencies for four-year colleges, and have many spin-off benefits—increased communication within and between the four-year and two-year college communities, creation of innovative courses, improvement of support services to minority students, and clarification of the four-year college curriculum. We offer this report to induce—not discourage—other colleges to consider this socially significant innovation. The project will reward sponsoring institutions with increased enrollments of capable students and bring satisfaction to the program participants.

THE PROGRAMS

1. Agnes Scott College, Atlanta Metropolitan College, and DeKalb College.

The success of the Investigating Transfer Program resulted from the dedication and commitment of program faculty, staff, and peer counselors, the support of staff who were not directly involved in the summer portion of the program, and the willingness of open-minded, curious students to participate. These factors reinforced each other: the students, for example, inspired faculty and staff members who assisted their efforts to obtain an education.

Recruited faculty members quickly agreed on the titles and design of the three courses. Agnes Scott faculty members helped to set the criteria for admission: three quarters or 30 hours of work with a 2.75 minimum GPA by the start of the summer program. Community college faculty members nominated 126 students. Selection teams—including a faculty member or administrator from each partner—were sensitive to the gender and racial mix of the students, and chose nominees for whom "the program could make a difference in that student's life." Agnes Scott is a women's college, and program staff correctly expected that women would submit most of the applications. Nineteen of the program's 25 places went to women, and only one white male student attended. Fifteen students were African-American or African; the other ten were European-American. The cohort included 15 DeKalb College students and ten Atlanta Metropolitan College students—average two-year college GPA 3.41; age range 17 to 65 years; average age 26. Our 65-year old student—widowed with four grown children—inspired others with her energy and dedication. "Minority" students—African-Americans and women—were in the "majority." These loving, courageous students created a genial program atmosphere. An experienced consultant from the Vassar program helped acculturate the students, and peer counselors fostered a caring environment.

Eager but apprehensive students moved into a recently renovated, air-conditioned facility. The residence symbolized the college's commitment to the program, and contributed to student self-esteem and dedication. The location of the college made it inevitable that students would go home on weekends. This probably involved an academic cost, but family interaction may have reduced midweek distractions. Three students never seemed to become involved in the residential learning

experience. They resisted peer counselor attempts to bring them into the group's residential life. But the 22 students who took advantage of the resources provided by the partner colleges had a positive experience.

Program faculty members visited the residence to discuss course content and expectations. We assigned all students to their first two choices. Fifteen of the 25 students elected "Elementary Discrete Mathematics." Most students said they benefitted from the course; some indicated they would take more courses in mathematics because they acquired a new outlook on mathematical analysis. But some students said the content was too difficult and the pace was too fast. Faculty members lowered their expectations for these students, but they still learned to overcome their difficulties with mathematics. Thirteen students enrolled in "Technology, Human Values and Public Policy: Genetic Engineering." Students began to feel comfortable dealing with issues of technology.

"Cross-Cultural Connections" attracted 22 of the program's 25 students, and thus served as a core course, and as the basis for many extramural discussions. Students were sensitized to cultural differences in attitudes and beliefs, and were enabled to see deeper into themselves and others. The course permeated the lives of students throughout their waking hours. Program directors and students concluded that other colleges should consider "Cross-Cultural Connections" as a core course. Faculty and student diversity—European-Americans and males were in the minority—contributed to success. Not every program could have the mix of students we did, but the mix becomes crucial for this course to serve as a core.

The course also produced bonding that strengthened a sense of community. So did attendance at a once-in-a-lifetime event during the second week of the program: Nelson Mandela's moving speech in Atlanta. We will not always have Nelson Mandela visit early in the program, but careful planning—perhaps orchestration—of an event that promotes bonding has enormous benefits.

Program faculty members praised the flexibility of the director, counselors, other faculty members, and the college staff. Much flexibility arose out of candid weekly lunch meetings of the director, faculty, and peer counselors. Concern for the students was always paramount while academic integrity was protected. Faculty members, for example, changed assignment due dates to reflect priorities in other classes and reports of

student stress from the counselors. Students were relieved when the directors cancelled some recreational activities because of the workload.

Faculty members praised the peer counselors who "established the proper mood for courses and residence halls" and helped with writing assignments. Counselors enthusiastically participated in the program, and took away new insights, experience, knowledge, and friendships. The peer counselors complemented each other academically and socially, and became good friends with each other, as well as with the students. Some students thought the counselors were overzealous, but this is probably more a tribute to their efforts than a serious criticism.

Students received transfer admissions and financial aid counseling during and after the program. Students also attended a college fair that involved selective regional institutions. We urged our students to use faculty members in the program as references. The program provided lunches to faculty members to facilitate student interaction. The efforts of support staff—rarely mentioned in program evaluations—were crucial to the program's success.

The tense last week of the program resembled a typical campus with its preoccupation with final tests and papers. But a sense of fulfillment emerged when the group confronted its impending breakup. Faculty members, counselors, students, and the director offered emotional and inspiring statements at the final dinner. Participants came away with growth or a new commitment. We were glad that the program's work and stress had ended, but we were also glad that a sense of community and caring emerged. Our involvement changed each of us. The next morning, tears and hugs were evident, participants were in no hurry to leave, and the good-byes were long and deliberate. They had lived, worked, studied, debated, learned, played, celebrated and cried together, and the program that assembled this group of friends and colleagues was ending.

We have built a strong foundation for future programs somewhat through design and somewhat through accidents of fortune. Most students said the gains were worth the foregone income and time away from their families. "I've never had any teachers make me think so much in such a short period of time," one student noted. Another participant stated: "The volume of work stretched me to the limit, but it has proven to me what I can do." Students were positive about the classes, faculty, writing assistance, peer counselors, and living arrangements. Some participants

complained about short library hours and the brief duration of the program. But more time, others realized, might have led to increased procrastination, not reduced pressure. A longer program, one faculty member added, would have meant waning student and faculty energy levels. The short program let students see the value of time management, and handle the challenge and stress. Most participants plan to encourage transfer-oriented peers to attend the next program. They expressed new-found confidence that they "could do anything now," and will look at Agnes Scott and similar colleges when they contemplate transfer.

2. Hamilton College, Mohawk Valley Community College, Onondaga Community College, and SUNY Morrisville.

The STEP program was a collaboration between Hamilton College and three contiguous two-year colleges. During spring and summer, 1989, the two-year partners and Hamilton each nominated faculty participants. The six chosen faculty members exchanged ideas for courses that featured the theme of technology and society—courses on work, technology and ideology, science and literature emerged from those meetings. Faculty members designed their courses in pairs during the school year, and we tried to coordinate the courses around common themes, texts, and films.

A group from the partner colleges attended the Vassar "Exploring Transfer" (ET) program and was infected with high hopes and expectations by the energy, excitement, and intensity of the Vassar program. We attended ET classes and spoke with ET students and faculty. We later returned to Vassar for an important "nuts and bolts" meeting of representatives from the replication programs. We discovered at these meetings that we could obtain New York State Tuition Assistance Program funds from our students.

We recruited the core staff, and designed a recruitment brochure and poster that emphasized educational opportunity and personal achievement—not Hamilton's wealth or reputation. Two-year college administrators and faculty members, assisted by Hamilton staff, identified and encouraged exceptional, talented students to apply. We hoped to choose 25 students from a pool of at least 60 applicants—20 from each school. But, the few students who attended information sessions at partner campuses needed reassurance that STEP participation did not jeopardize TAP funding, or complained that we did not provide for the children of single parents. When we found that we could

house and feed children at low cost in apartments, we decided to admit single-parents with children. We housed most students in a dormitory, and meals were taken at a dining hall. Applications still fell short of expectations, and the selection committee, composed of two-year college faculty members and the Hamilton faculty and staff, took risks in admitting 27 of 42 applicants. Many students suffered the abuses of poverty and dysfunctional families, a condition that led to problems during the program, including alcohol abuse, marital problems, and racial tension. These troublesome problems are inevitable in a group of at-risk students, but alcohol abuse was less than the norm at schools like Hamilton College. We accepted four single-parents with children and two mothers with children. Other students later complained that children diverted time and money from the needs and concerns of the STEP Program, and distracted them from their studies.

A meeting at Hamilton of the accepted students, faculty members, and support staff created great excitement and anticipation. STEP, participants concluded, could help Hamilton become a more diverse, open, and multi-cultural institution. Hamilton could help the STEP students explore transfer. We selected three student fellows from among recent Hamilton College graduates, and completed plans for school transportation and child-care. Our orientation program included a library course, information on how to use the writing center and the computers, and information on available support services. A single-parent exclaimed, "I feel like Cinderella!"

Students knew ours were three tough courses—not a diluted education. Many members of the regular Hamilton College student body might not survive the intensity of finishing half a 14-week semester in five weeks. Faculty members considered their courses labors of love and brought care, hard work, and self-discipline to the classroom. Teaching was exhausting and exhilarating, but the faculty retained a personal interest in the students.

The heavy workload shocked many students, but most rose to the occasion. Spirits were high, most students worked diligently, classes went well, and the faculty got along fine during the first weeks. Some students began to complain that the courses were too demanding, but other students rejected the preferential treatment that reduced reading assignments implied. Students praised course content and faculty attention and concern. Students at the two-year colleges, they noted, memorized reading material and heard lectures on their content. But STEP teachers expected students to

understand the material. Student opinions not only mattered, they were a key component of class discussions.

Student fellows, who contributed diverse, complementary strengths, were the wheels upon which the program ran. STEP students gave them high marks for their concern, maturity, and professionalism in difficult situations. Student fellows gave far more than the expected amount of time, energy, and care. The fellows reported—and may have facilitated—strong student bonding. STEP students included insecure loners and outsiders who did not know their capabilities or of existing possibilities. STEP provided a supportive, participatory experience to these students. Bonding—which occurred informally since academic intensity limited our extracurriculum—continued through the last weekend and through parties later that summer.

We encouraged students to seek advice about transfer and career opportunities, but limited resources made us unable to provide transfer information about other schools. Financial constraints curtailed our ability to use the college health center and the library during evenings and weekends, or to provide a study skills person and other needed support staff. Nor did we have enough time to orient STEP students adequately. Funding is an ongoing problem for the STEP program.

Three students left the program during the second half of STEP, including a single-parent who could not balance the workload and her children's needs, despite expenditure of considerable resources. These departures jolted the group, and generated a sense of crisis. False rumors spread, and the stress of the first four weeks took its toll. We assumed that the age and maturity of our students eliminated the need for paternalism or extensive rules—we lacked a student handbook that listed program goals, and academic and social expectations—but we were forced to intervene in this instance. Student resentment over the intervention further increased tension, but the group spirit and diligence reasserted itself during the last week. Exhaustion replaced other emotions, but the final dinner and party revived the participants. Joyful faces reflected togetherness, excitement, and accomplishment.

The program had its skeptics—the dean was warned about the kind of people likely to come to campus. Some critics were astonished that we found 25 two-year college students who could do Hamilton College work at all, let alone in a demanding five-week program. But we took a diverse group of students who ranged in age from 19 to 48, and who

had economic, educational, and social disadvantages and successfully gave them a taste of the liberal arts. When the dust cleared, 22 students finished their course work, thereby proving STEP a viable Hamilton College program. Most STEP students wish to transfer to a four-year institution, especially Hamilton. They offered to publicize the program and to apply for student fellow positions in future years. The local press, Hamilton's school newspaper, and the Hamilton administration and faculty praised the program, especially the diversity of the STEP students and their enthusiasm. Indeed, the Hamilton College community—especially the president and dean of faculty—continually supported and encouraged STEP; many community members volunteered their time and energy.

STEP was a huge success. Most participants grew through the experience—and recognized that growth. Students discovered an exciting new world that respected them as thinking, caring, educated persons. Most students who experienced this Cinderella-like transformation wanted to stay at the ball. One student regretted her imminent return to a life of poverty—and her definition of poverty went beyond economics. Students learned other ways of living their lives, becoming educated, and of being. They were empowered to think critically about themselves and the world and wished to be taken seriously as thinkers. This transformation is a wonderful gift if it outlasts a summer program. STEP must continue to help its students fulfill their new goals and aspirations, lest memories of the program become painful reminders of what might have been.

3. Lewis & Clark College and Portland Community College.

> I feel incredibly fortunate to have been chosen to attend this program. It's been one of the high points of my life: being in a classroom with students just as motivated as I, being challenged with new ideas, new concepts....I am more confident of my academic abilities. Some teachers say I would be an asset to this school. I treasure that.

This student comment illustrates the enthusiasm generated by our academically and socially intense Community College Transfer (CCT) program. Most participants were over-achievers who produced an energetic, exciting—and stressful—atmosphere. The reading load, the emotionally charged issues, the writing

expectations, and the high performance standards all contributed to this atmosphere. Save for one discouraged student, the 23 participants considered the program an overwhelming success that they would recommend to others.

Our student selection process worked efficiently and effectively. Portland Community College (PCC) professors identified most participants and influenced them to apply and to participate in the program. The admissions committee, which included all six faculty members, recruited a talented, motivated, and heterogeneous cohort, although most recruits already perceived themselves as potential transfers to four-year institutions. Faculty members recommended that the selection process emphasize emotional maturity, particularly the student's ability to function in a group.

The interdisciplinary, interinstitutional curriculum and pedagogy were strong features of our program. The program's three team-taught courses emphasized critical inquiry. "Biomedicine and Society: Recreating the Human by Engineering Genes and Transforming Reproduction" explored the social and ethical consequences of technologies that make up "the new genetics" and "the new reproduction." "The Transforming Power of Ritual in Native American and Hispanic Cultures" showed students how the rituals of Native American and Hispanic subcultures may renew the life of the dominant culture. By generating their own rituals in the class, students learned how the rituals resolve conflict in, bring focus to, and renew the lives of individuals. "Art, Society and Values" developed a sense of social and aesthetic perspectives by connecting art, architecture and social values, especially those values generated by the market system. Students used the academic disciplines to ask questions and examine important issues. Applying critical thinking, research, and conjecture to their studies and their self-concept may be the key result of the program for students.

The three courses fulfilled our critical inquiry core requirement, and were "writing intensive." During orientation, students and faculty met in groups, wrote informally, and shared their writing. In class, students submitted essays in draft for faculty comment and then in revised form—and developed new, complex writing strategies. The director of the Lewis & Clark writing center offered writing workshops to faculty members and R.A.s. These workshops showed how to construct successful assignments and how to build by stages from informal to formal writing. The director also discussed feedback and evaluation. The

R.A.s worked successfully as writing tutors for the students.

The low student-teacher ratio encouraged student participation in class. The outstanding teaching abilities and likable personalities of faculty members made them approachable. Students were impressed with instructors' efforts to contact them during non-classroom hours. Faculty members were sensitive to student anxieties and provided support as well as challenge. When the students in one course expressed a clear consensus that the pace was too fast, the load too heavy, the faculty modified the syllabus. Students identified the classroom climate as essential to their success. But faculty members differed on the desirability of reducing the program's academic "intensity," and many students felt like "guinea pigs" because this was a pilot program.

CCT also provided opportunities for faculty development that spanned the boundaries between two-year and four-year institutions. "My colleague and I are perfectly matched in this project," a PCC faculty member noted, "and working with her has been the best reward of this program." Student response to team-teaching in two courses was positive. But CCT included no minority faculty members—a problem we cannot soon remedy since few members of minority groups teach liberal arts subjects at either institution.

CCT challenged our students. But most students and faculty members asked that we also encourage students to relax with each other and to exchange ideas informally, outside of class. Students often spent up to ten hours a day preparing their reading and writing assignments, leaving little time for informal study groups, conversations, or guilt-free down-time. CCT must maintain the current level of academic expectation and still promote informal learning and personal growth. The successful white-water rafting trip on the Deschutes River showed us that we need to increase the number of non-academic activities that involve faculty and students.

Coordination with campus offices resulted from a sincere desire to serve ethnic minority and non-traditional students. Providing adequate library hours and computer access is perhaps the greatest challenge in supporting the students. Support sessions on admissions, financial aid, and career opportunities should take place before students begin to feel anxious about the academic pace.

The students noted the friendliness, helpfulness, and caring of the non-teaching staff. Students singled out the three resident assistants—three women and two

recent transfers to Lewis & Clark—as essential for the program's success. Early selection of R.A.s allows for their integration into planning the curriculum. Students found the food less than exciting, and complained about noise and violation of privacy—though we housed all but two students in single rooms. Many students spent weekends, and sometimes several evenings during the week, at home. Four students held regular jobs during the program. We emphasized the importance of considering the dorm "home" during the program, but it is difficult to create and sustain the illusion of separation from home for the students who live in Portland. Several students had difficulty living with people with different values and lifestyles. But most students recommended that successor cohorts commit themselves to taking full advantage of the program and to curtail outside commitments. The students who spent the least amount of time on campus regretted their absence from the program's non-academic aspects.

The collaborative program between PCC and Lewis & Clark impressed colleagues at other Portland-area universities and fits well with a state-wide movement to motivate and prepare community college students for successful transfer to a four-year college or university. Community college students acquired an enhanced sense of accomplishment and the confidence to develop and follow through on higher educational goals. Most students listed a bachelor's degree or higher as their degree goal when they applied, but this expectation became more real after this experience. Participants also identified broader educational alternatives, including private liberal arts colleges, for their further study. Their success will inspire many additional students to consider transfer.

4. Bucknell University and Community College of Philadelphia.

STEP—a joint endeavor of Bucknell University and the Community College of Philadelphia—sought to convince students that they could earn a baccalaureate degree in a four-year institution, including selective colleges like Bucknell. The program aimed to impart enough information and assistance to make transfer a reality, stimulate students to transfer, strengthen student confidence in their abilities, develop transfer opportunities, and introduce students to a four-year learning community.

CCP—Philadelphia's sole two-year college—promotes a liberal arts core curriculum. Minority students comprise over 50 percent of the CCP student body. Bucknell, a private college, emphasizes residential

education, selective admissions, a favorable faculty-to-student ratio, a strong commitment to teaching, professional and liberal arts degree programs, and support services that contribute to academic and personal development. Bucknell's 90 percent record of undergraduate degree completions includes minority students.

STEP sought motivated, disadvantaged minority or non-traditional students with high academic potential, who were uncertain about their suitability for baccalaureate studies. CCP asked faculty members to nominate students with at least a year of course work and a 2.50 minimum GPA. The STEP selection process engaged the CCP student body and faculty in sustained thinking about transfer. Each request for a letter of recommendation—STEP required two letters per applicant—alerted a faculty member to STEP and to the applicant's transfer potential. Many students also asked faculty mentors for counsel in writing the required personal essay. Transfer at CCP became a key academic concern, not a function relegated to a bureaucratic office.

The CCP community took pride in its new alliance with Bucknell, and CCP faculty members saw themselves as transfer "sponsors." Many CCP faculty sponsors had believed that two-year college students were inadequately prepared for college-level work. But faculty participation in the admissions process increased their expectations for "non-traditional" students. Participation also reminded these faculty members that they shared similar academic backgrounds and training with their colleagues at four-year institutions and were part of a larger academic community. CCP and Bucknell faculty members reviewed videotaped interviews conducted with half of the 140 applicants and selected the 25 participants. All students, including two drawn from the waiting list, finished the six-week program—an indicator of strong student commitment.

Each institution appointed a faculty director for the academic and curricular elements of the program. These co-directors sought and selected faculty members from regular faculty and told each interested faculty member about the program's goals, the substantial time needed to develop new courses, and the team-teaching requirement. Strong faculty interest facilitated selection of three Bucknell faculty members. Residence away from Philadelphia made participation more complex for CCP personnel, but Bucknell provided each CCP faculty member with a suite that could accommodate a family. In spring 1990, faculty members from both institutions

met and developed course outlines.

Most students arrived without extraneous prior commitments—and most faculty members, staff, and peer counselors devoted full attention to the program. Bucknell provided students with single air-conditioned dorm rooms, tuition exemption for two courses, required books, a $100 weekly stipend, three daily meals, ancillary instruction, academic support and advising, recreational and nonacademic activities, and access to academic, computer, and recreation facilities—all without fee. Male and female STEP students lived on adjacent dormitory floors. Each floor contained a meeting room or lounge. Residential comportment was good. Some students initially complained that their peers made too much noise, but the peer counselors helped the group set its own noise rules. The cafeteria menu paid attention to dietary needs.

Students attended a reception and orientation upon arrival, met with course instructors and peer counselors, chose their courses, and began classes. The peer counselors received orientation, helped the students move in, attended the opening reception, and began their duties. CCP faculty members moved into their campus apartments, met their Bucknell team teachers, moved into their offices, and met their classes.

The program offered three courses team-taught by six faculty members. Each course had a peer counselor who provided interpretive tutorial help to the students. "Literature and Social Criticism" analyzed and discussed established literary and political texts related to questions of contemporary social justice. "Mathematical Sensitivity and Engineering Limits" emphasized a laboratory- and computer-based methodology to analyze physical phenomena. The course required no mathematics beyond algebra, but some students found it unsettling and difficult. The small enrollment was advantageous in a course with a substantial laboratory component. "Environment of Life" combined formal analysis and direct observation of pollution forces and related ecological disturbances. These pedagogically successful courses differed in the degree of team symmetry and empathy. Peer counselors—regular Bucknell students—acted as teaching assistants, and offered review sessions, usually before examinations. But the counselors emphasized informal, individual discussions. Instructors offered periodic feedback and required papers or final exams.

The CCP staff rightly predicted that compositional skills required special attention. CCP staffed the

program, at its own expense, with an experienced writing instructor. This tutor helped each student with the required course papers that were written in Bucknell's microcomputer labs. "Mathematical Sensitivity and Engineering Limits" required substantial use of computation and graphics programs in the labs. The library reference staff demonstrated methods of accessing library resources.

The program staff met weekly to discuss academic and social issues. Students conveyed suggestions via the weekly "Fireside Chats," or through peer counselors. The peer counselors and their supervisor provided voluntary weekend recreational and shopping trips, and implemented a "ropes course," a group solidarity and leadership program that improved self-confidence and mutual student trust and reliance. The STEP newsletter listed activities, schedule changes, and policy statements. Other communication devices included bulletin boards, weekly gatherings, and the "Fireside Chats."

Students found STEP involving, demanding, and stimulating. To maintain morale, we invited the students to select a permanent name for the program and to design a logo. Students also planned a "Family Weekend"—a timely break from the program's hard work. Family members came from Philadelphia, participated in campus and local events, and slept on campus.

We often videotaped program events, as well as the admissions and exit interviews. Study of this footage will reveal important information about STEP's effect on the students. We hope to raise funds and disseminate program information through a videotape presentation that will accompany copies of featured articles on STEP in the *Lewisburg Journal*, the *Harrisburg Patriot*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The students created a photograph album depicting the changes that occurred during the program. The peer counselors left a notebook in a residence hall lounge and invited students to put down thoughts and ideas. This journal provides information about student aspirations and preoccupations.

Group solidarity and much caring developed between students, faculty members, and staff. On the final evening of the program, students consumed an ethnic feast at a faculty member's home, and attended a "graduation" ceremony in a charming campus building. The cheers and applause that greeted the students when they received their graduation certificates reflected the occasion's emotional intensity. Many students embraced and vowed to stay in touch when the bus departed in the morning.

The program built student

confidence that transfer was achievable, changed aspirations and attitudes, and widened the available choices. CCP and Bucknell staff expected students to return to CCP at least for another semester. But some students wished to transfer immediately. Students were eager—even impatient—to learn about Bucknell's admissions policies and financial aid packages. This widespread interest in Bucknell surprised us since only a few students expressed specific interest in Vassar in prior years. Sentiment for transfer to Bucknell arose so quickly that we had to make many decisions during the six-week program. Bucknell had completed admissions, financial aid, and housing decisions late in the previous spring, so few resources—especially housing—were available in August.

But STEP faculty teams found many students ready for transfer at program's end. Additional semesters at CCP, these students noted, simply delayed the program's key goal. Five students completed the Bucknell admissions and financial aid process and four students enrolled in the fall, with at least eight students expected subsequently. One student transferred to the four-year program at Beaver College; a second transferred to a nursing program at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia.

We carefully discussed child care when we decided to accelerate admission to Bucknell. The Vassar model mandated full-time study and therefore excluded children. But one impressive student—who succeeded in STEP—was allowed to bring her child who was placed in a county-run summer program. The five STEP mothers with dependent children argued that parents should not have to choose between education and family—at Bucknell or anywhere else. They convinced Bucknell authorities to admit at least three transfer students with dependent children—the most profound change in Bucknell's student body in many decades.

The STEP Program involved much of Bucknell's administrative and service structure. The staff who assisted became invested in the success of the program. Trustees and faculty members took notice of a program that addressed a national concern and provided a new avenue for minority student recruitment. Teaching CCP students, Bucknell faculty members concluded, was a rewarding opportunity and a salutary form of faculty development.

STEP led CCP to reconceptualize the teaching process and its attitude towards transfer. Many CCP faculty members believed their students could not succeed at a

"serious" college and discouraged them from investigating transfer opportunities. Faculty members also presumed that CCP's transfer office, maintained by the counseling department, relieved them of responsibility for monitoring the transfer potential of their students. But the transfer office staff considered transfer a mechanical procedure and emphasized access to information—looking at catalogues or using the on-line computer program. CCP students saw the difficulties involved in transfer, and concluded they were on their own. STEP directly challenged this outlook. Students are actively engaged in transfer—they don't just drop in. Faculty members and students realize that many inner-city students can transfer to selective four-year institutions.

The CCP/Bucknell partnership succeeded because rapport developed among senior administrators, staff, and faculty members. STEP would have faltered had we seen it as a product of a leader and follower. CCP administrative and faculty leadership in publicizing the program led to an excellent choice of students. Bucknell covered most costs, but CCP added a faculty member to co-administer the program and supported student writing, advising, and program assessment. The CCP staff had credibility advantages with the students that the Bucknell staff could not quickly duplicate. Bucknell hopes that STEP begins a partnership with CCP that will generate many programs and institutional efforts.

5. Smith College and Greater Hartford Community College.

Community College Connections, an intensive five-week, residential summer program at Smith for women from Greater Hartford Community College, culminated two years of cooperation. Smith joined forces with GHCC, an urban school that sent few students to Northampton and that had a high proportion of students of color.

We sought women students who had completed about half of a two-year degree program, who had not considered a four-year degree, and who came from a family without experience with the liberal arts or B.A. degrees. We asked advisers and faculty members to recommend students who did well in writing courses and who showed intellectual promise. We wished to recruit students of color but did not intend to create an exclusive program for "minority" students. Nor did we impose an age restriction. We accepted some students who completed, or nearly completed, AA degree requirements and some students who planned to transfer.

GHCC administrators in student services and counseling took primary responsibility for recruiting students. These administrators asked GHCC faculty members to identify students who met the program profile. Students provided information about their family and educational background, a transcript, a letter of recommendation from a faculty member, and an essay describing their educational history and goals. Smith and GHCC faculty members and administrators admitted 25 students from the 50 applicants and placed six students on a waiting list. Six accepted students declined admission, and CCC admitted all students on the waiting list. Seventeen participants were students of color—the median age was 23, and their AA programs covered many fields. The GHCC staff arranged an orientation session, and invited Smith faculty members and staff and student family members and friends to attend. Participants asked about residential life and expectations for the courses.

The three program directors frequently discussed student and faculty recruitment, program management, and fund raising. They asked Hartford foundations and corporations to see CCC as part of their community responsibility. During the program the directors laid the groundwork for advising and evaluating potential transfers to Smith.

Each student took two of three interdisciplinary, team-taught courses for six transferable credits. Interdisciplinary team-teaching requires a high level of trust and compatibility, and the directors decided that faculty teams should self-select. Each project director invited teachers with interdisciplinary experience to apply. Smith limited applications to tenured faculty members since the program required much time and energy that junior faculty members might better devote to scholarship. We invited seven GHCC and five Smith faculty members with definite interests to a meeting to discuss course ideas. Three Smith-GHCC collaborative courses emerged: the sixties, health care, and boundaries. "Movements of the Sixties" emphasized the civil rights movement. "Boundaries: Exploration of Self and Community in Fiction, Poetry and Essays" examined African-American and Hispanic literature and essays. Ethnicity, class, and gender issues appeared throughout "Hard Choices in Health Care: Ethics, Economics, and Politics." The relevant GHCC departments and the Smith academic policy committee approved the courses, which stressed writing—journals, research papers, short essays, and group projects.

We envisaged this program as an opportunity for faculty development through course innovation and team-teaching. By helping to select students, faculty members worked together before sharing teaching responsibilities. We discussed teaching strategies that enabled students to develop oral arguments effectively, work in groups, and complete writing assignments. Some faculty members visited the other classes, invited their colleagues to present in their classes, and met informally with colleagues and students. Smith faculty members and administrators—some who had started their higher education with AA degrees—joined the students for lunch or dinner and discussed their fields or their own educational histories. Students and faculty members alike were pleased with the interdisciplinary character of the courses and with team-teaching. The directors recommended that one team repeat their course next year, or at least that some experienced faculty members participate in new teams.

CCC held classes on four days—Wednesdays were reserved for special events, workshops, library work, and studying. We expected students to stay on campus for weekends but did not enforce that rule strictly. Some students returned home to attend to family matters. We planned for formal programs on weekends—field trips to areas of historic, literary, and scientific interest in the Pioneer Valley. But our budget—and student preference for informal activities—led us to abandon these plans.

Students were fed and housed in single rooms in Washburn House, in the center of campus. The residence directors had experience in student residential life during the year. The three peer assistants—one associated with each course—were Smith undergraduates. Each assistant attended a course, linked the faculty team and the students, set up study groups, and provided support for the faculty members. As they learned the system, they helped students negotiate academic and residential challenges, and helped the residence directors unify the program's residential and academic components. Smith's Center for Academic Development provided two writing counselors and a quantitative skills counselor who also offered workshops on study habits and time management. Some students initially resisted CAD assistance as a remedial program, but all students came to appreciate the center, as they realized that all Smith students use its resources.

The pattern of student life during the five weeks followed rhythms that resembled the Vassar model.

Apprehension was high in the first week and the reading assignments seemed heavy. Students settled into their work the second week and soon felt freer to explore Northampton and Boston. But tensions developed and became more pervasive as deadlines for final assignments approached and fatigue increased. These tensions centered around—but were not limited to—a few outspoken personalities.

On the last Friday of CCC, the students demanded a general meeting. Some of us expected anger and confrontation; the program was intense and feelings ran high. Some students were distressed by racial tensions in the course materials and in residential interactions. Some, primarily white, students objected to "always talking about racism" or to "only talking about conflict and differences, never about what we have in common." Both white students and some students of color longed for at least one course with a less emotional subject matter—algebra came to mind.

House conversations suggested that the uncomfortable students wanted to blame someone. These problems, they contended, did not exist at GHCC. They felt internal divisions because Smith was a white institution. The professors should have resolved the tensions in class and the administration should not have allowed a singleminded attention to racial differences rather than human (or female) commonality.

But instead of a contentious encounter, the students demonstrated leadership and community that realized our goals for the program. The students—independent of any direct assistance or intervention by the faculty or staff—had met for hours after completing their evening's studies, chose a team of three students to facilitate the joint meeting, and required respect for all speakers, constructive criticism, and a chance for everyone to speak. Everyone in the room, said the student who opened the meeting, worked very hard for five weeks. We should congratulate each other on our accomplishments as a community. The students then enumerated the strengths of the program, said that CCC was successful and worth continuing, and expressed their respect for the faculty, the staff, and each other.

But the students did not shy away from criticism or from conflict within their own ranks. They presented written observations and criticisms, and then allowed for a full discussion. Some students, primarily white, expressed discomfort at the focus on "racism," but a spokeswoman for the Hispanic students said that they had never before studied Hispanic writers in school. A

Black student said she had only learned about Black history on her own. One Hispanic student tried to elaborate on how important it was to her to study Hispanic and Black experience in class, but she was too moved to speak. A friend relayed her thoughts—she always experienced the classroom as a "minority" student and saw the world through the eyes of the dominant culture. CCC Hispanic and African-American students—here in the majority—found their experiences and cultures included in the course materials. They understood the discomfort of white students who experienced this meeting the way Black and Hispanic students experienced the classroom. But white students should learn about distinctive aspects of African-American and Hispanic cultures—and commonalities. Black and Hispanic students cheered her on. Some white students sided with her, some were skeptical, some struggled to understand because they cared about each other.

The inclusion of cultures neglected by the traditional curriculum can create a profound learning experience for all students. This experience came vividly to life that afternoon. Similar learning experiences take place during the regular Smith term. But discussions of race and ethnicity are often heard only as accusations of racism when the dominant majority of students is white. There is pressure to move beyond discussion of difference to acclamation of commonality—before an understanding of difference allows appreciation of difference to take the place of tolerance.

All 25 students stayed with the program to the end and achieved good grades. They muttered about long assignments, thought the first week's readings were meant to last the entire term, and dubbed the final week "hell week." But that afternoon, they testified to the program's academic value and to their increased intellectual self-confidence.

The residential character of the program also allowed for accelerated intense learning. Students complained that they had been prepared for the academic—but not the emotional—challenge of the program. They wanted to resolve more of their discomfort in class. We reiterated our belief in a residential learning experience. Students are sources of learning for each other—classwork sparks acquisition of long-lasting knowledge that students work out for themselves in a residential setting. The program created even more of a hothouse than we have during the regular term. When students take the same courses and reside together, the only way to escape

was leaving campus altogether. We had not, the students rightly noted, prepared them for the emotional and interpersonal dimensions of the program. It may not be possible to prepare them fully, but a "residential liberal arts experience" is a code that needs more elaboration for inexperienced students.

This positive resolution occurred because the students were a community of women. The recruitment and orientation materials did not address the benefits of a women's college. But the group understood these benefits—being taken seriously as students, incorporation of women's experience and expression in their courses, and mutual respect and support. At the final meeting, the students affirmed their shared their background at GHCC, their shared experience at Smith, and their ability to create a powerful and supportive community of women.

The final meeting crystallized the most important lessons of CCC. We created CCC to enable students to recognize their ability to succeed in a four-year, residential, liberal arts environment, to experience the benefits of a women's college, and to create a multicultural program. Students who would not have considered a highly selective, liberal arts college—and whom most colleges would have overlooked—could demonstrate their academic capabilities, intellectual bent, and eagerness to pursue learning. Capable and caring women in a community with good support systems can develop processes for negotiating their conflicts that go beyond the dominance of one personality or another. When students of color see themselves valued in the curriculum and when there are enough of them in a group for their own differences to emerge, they develop intellectual confidence more quickly and, perhaps, more deeply than when they are isolated and constantly feel like outsiders. White students are more likely to struggle through white solipsism and guilt toward a better understanding of their colleagues.

Our students resisted any suggestion that GHCC is an inferior institution or that they needed "special help." They wanted more education, a different set of educational goals than the two-year degree offers. CCC students were not as challenged by the required type of work as by the amount and intensity of work.

Should we sponsor more CCC sessions? There are high costs associated with the program—especially in time and energy from the faculty director and from the teaching faculty. The courses, while similar to Smith courses, were created for this program. Team-teaching is invigorating but much more demanding than teaching solo. We

raised some funds to cover the cost of the program but fell short of our goal. We can save some funds when designing future programs, but CCC requires the directors, the faculty members, and the development offices to give it top priority.

Is it worth it? If you believe that it's worth it to watch an intelligent student begin to see herself as an intellectual being for the first time, to develop an analysis of course material and of her own experience that she didn't have when she came, then the answer is yes. If you believe that we should be actively involved in the national effort to create bridges between urban, two-year colleges and selective four-year colleges, the answer is yes. If you believe that the multicultural character of the program can teach us ways to realize the goals of the Smith design more effectively during the year, then, clearly, yes.

The program merges the values of women's education, multicultural education, and commitment to good teaching, and makes "diversity" real in ways we rarely see during the year. Seven or eight excellent candidates for transfer to Smith emerged. Other students are considering other four-year colleges or liberal arts programs at four-year colleges they had already chosen. We had seen this program as an opportunity for faculty and staff to think about effective teaching. Frequent meetings—both formal and informal—with the faculty, C.A.D. and other staff members realized this goal as well. A GHCC faculty member wrote:

> The project called on more emotional and intellectual energy than I had expected to give it or can now completely account for. But the satisfactions expanded in proportion. I'm grateful to have been part of this remarkable little community, can already see that the five weeks have been permanently useful to me as both teacher and student, and am eager to see future CCC participants follow up on what we've learned while unveiling their own surprises.

The students worked through the difficulties of residential life in a demanding academic setting and convened the general meeting. We distributed the certificates at a party that evening that celebrated the conclusion of a successful, difficult program.

WHAT WAS LEARNED: A SYNTHESIS

The Vassar/AAC National Project on Community College Transfer funded five comprehensive collaborations between committed two- and four-year colleges. Faculty, staff, and student commitments sustained these programs through inevitable periods of stress. Students understood that these comprehensive programs—though primarily academic—were not simply aimed at completing two courses. Instead, the programs led students to consider transfer to four-year colleges, especially to selective four-year colleges that previously appeared academically and socially beyond their reach.

The programs shared fundamental assumptions and characteristics, but differed on specifics. This section analyzes the unifying elements and the strategic and tactical differences.

1. Student selection. The experience of the five programs suggests that the ideal target population is "at-risk" students: capable students who would not transfer—especially to independent colleges—save for these programs. The programs should not be aimed at sure bets, or hopeless candidates. The Vassar model assumed that the selection process would unearth these students. But the programs admitted students with a wide range of orientations. The Lewis & Clark program enhanced the transfer prospects of students who already contemplated transfer. At Hamilton, few applicants previously saw transfer as their goal, and the program probably helped students consider the transfer option. The modal participant at the Bucknell program expressed a strong interest in transfer, but readiness for transfer and likelihood of transfer dramatically increased. All programs reported that participants were more likely to transfer to an independent college.

Programs should guard against a lack of candor when recruiting participants. The admissions committees should reject students that a four-year college already accepted. But, these programs should distinguish between accepted students and declared transfer candidates with indefinite plans. Admissions committees should look for an academic orientation but should not assume that candidates are well-informed, especially about the nature of selective liberal arts colleges.

The CCP-Bucknell collaboration employed the most elaborate admissions mechanism. Program organizers solicited applications from 600 African-American students who met two screening criteria: a 2.75 GPA and 24

credits. The program received inquiries from 160 students. Eighty students completed the four-part application form, wrote an essay, and solicited two letters of recommendation. CCP also videotaped admissions and exit interviews. These admissions interviews allowed Bucknell faculty members to evaluate CCP students. The admissions committee looked for letters of recommendation from two-year college faculty members known to teach difficult courses. Recruitment efforts by faculty members, administrators, and successful transfer students enhanced the applicant pool at several colleges. At Bucknell, as elsewhere, the recruitment effort produced a data base of potential transfer students whom the two-year colleges could track and encourage—whether or not they were accepted or rejected—or even applied—to the CCP-Bucknell program.

Several programs had to decide whether to admit single-parent candidates—a significant question since two-year college students are ten years older on the average than students at partner four-year institutions. Different institutional histories, traditions, and levels of institutional responsiveness produced different answers. Some colleges, for example, admitted parents but did not permit children to live with them during the program. Smith allocated some budgeted child care funds to keep children of students in Hartford with relatives.

In deciding on whether to admit single parents, colleges asked whether they could accommodate these students—especially through on-campus child care—if they transferred to their regular program. Most colleges could make five-week arrangements, but successful transfer programs require long-run commitments. Transfer to selective four-year colleges, Bucknell students noted, would fail if parents had to choose between their children and their education—or between their jobs and their education. Transfer to colleges like Smith—where 20 percent of the student body is in the return to college program—might be easier. And the problem may be less pressing for selective urban colleges that accommodated commuters. Adequate funding gives all students more options, and most programs found that financial considerations led some excellent candidates to turn down admission. But college officials must also consider factors that rarely apply to younger, middle-class students. Students who receive free room and board, for example, may lose their welfare checks.

Implementing a successful transfer program requires students to adjust to the world of the selective liberal arts college. But it also implies

institutional adjustment to a changed clientele. Raised student expectations can be dashed unless colleges undertake some fundamental changes. Student outspokenness is often necessary—participants must often convince skeptical four-year college administrators and faculty members that the presence of serious adult students in a diverse student body is not a problem but an opportunity that produces salutary results.

2. Faculty participation. A successful transfer program, all participants reported, requires a sense of belonging among faculty members and participating schools. This sense is maximized when faculty participants accept an egalitarian norm. Community college faculty members, for example, should receive visiting appointments from the four-year partners. Egalitarian team-teaching helps faculty members design non-traditional, interdisciplinary courses, reduces student confusion about locating the source of "truth," and permits a breakdown of faculty authority, in and out of class. Team teaching heightens the interest of older students. In preparing new colleagues for this open-ended, unpredictable teaching experience, program directors and experienced faculty members might also change faculty relationships and teaching methods at four-year colleges during the academic year.

An egalitarian norm should also govern institutional relationships. Community college faculty members should not feel that the four-year college favors one partner over another. When programs expand, two-year colleges can become protective and assertive in demanding ownership, and will challenge unequal community college participation. Two-year colleges will wish to remain included from year to year—a salutary condition since continued collaboration with the same partners permits faculty members to know what will occur during each week of the program and to predict student reactions. Stress emerges, for example, as more faculty members become involved in academic planning. But experience can facilitate adjustments between old and new faculty members. There can be competition between the increased number of community colleges for student admission as long as participants conclude that the resulting student body was fairly chosen. Ongoing partnerships, in short, are beneficial, though perhaps at the cost of serendipity. Program expansion is also desirable, as long as program participants share the egalitarian spirit.

3. Courses. Course planning

began with divergent assumptions and strategies. But all programs concluded that the courses, like all other parts of the summer experience, worked best when students and faculty members considered them stepping stones towards four-year college transfer—as well as ends in themselves.

All colleges employed a team-teaching strategy that facilitated the transitional goal of the courses, reduced disciplinary jargon that might have interfered with student learning, and provided a model for student collaboration. Some colleges first paired instructors who then devised a course. Other programs identified courses and recruited the instructors. Most program directors then allowed the team members to design the courses. When programs adapted an existing four-year course, they often inherited faculty members whose sense of "ownership" marred creation of an egalitarian spirit. Newly-developed courses, directors found, promoted faculty collaboration and reduced this sense of ownership. And newly-developed courses better prepared students for—and introduced students to—liberal arts as taught at the four-year college.

But "newly-developed" did not mean "watered-down." Credible courses permitted programs to retain legitimacy among institutional partners and among students who frequently asked: "Is this a real course?" Rigor also helped to predict student performance after transfer. Program participants, therefore, went to great lengths to obtain four-year college curriculum committee approval for these courses.

Participants agreed that academic programs should facilitate transition between two- and four-year colleges, build competencies, and include content that predicts academic success in four-year colleges. Some programs emphasized critical thinking; others, interdisciplinary studies; still others, disciplinary content. Most courses employed innovative teaching methods, such as collaborative learning strategies. The Bucknell "ropes course," in which students helped each other, facilitated group interaction. The colleges independently discovered that working class students responded well to experimental methods. The CCP's urban students, for example, explored many facets of Bucknell's rural environment.

Students sometimes expressed surprise that most courses had no prerequisites. Some program directors suggested that future programs consider prerequisites for interdisciplinary courses where students begin with little knowledge of the component disciplines. Successful courses often assumed some

experiential—rather than academic—prerequisites.

Evaluation was a thorny issue since some students felt they were being graded on whether they deserved to attend a four-year college. Students in some programs asked for grades though faculty members considered them a possible deterrent to transfer. No one advocated distorting the grading system. But these programs emphasized formative, rather than summative evaluations, and detailed measures of competencies, rather than traditional As and Bs.

The courses, program directors concluded, should prepare students for traditional four-year college environments that featured less team-teaching, greater disciplinary content, and more grading. But these innovations had transformational value. Community college students will not accept traditional instructional methods when they return in the fall. And program graduates may force four-year colleges to reevaluate their curricula and accepted teaching methods.

4. Residential Experience. Successful transfer programs, program directors agreed, required interrelated living and learning environments that facilitated student ownership. These environments permit communication—often through peer counselors—that alerts instructors to student difficulties and allows students to apply their academic learning to their lives. Ownership helps to reduce stress during the intense five-week program and increase students' confidence that they can lead successful academic and social lives at four-year colleges.

But building interrelated academic and social contexts requires deft planning. The key, directors concluded, was creation of a cohesive peer group. Students at the same community college often did not know each other before coming to the program, and, of course, students did not know their peers from other two-year colleges. Residence on the four-year college campus, program directors concluded, should quickly facilitate community.

Community-building started with shared concerns: fear of an unknown, alien world and of academic failure. Early conversations centered on academic survival and contained many allusions to the "boot camp" aspect of these programs. Shared experiences—including their community college backgrounds and their physical proximity—soon replaced shared concerns. A common community college experience and pride in their home institutions built student solidarity. Student-designed program logos, for example, included representations of both the community colleges and the

host four-year college.

Physical proximity also held students together. Rules had to be set to govern the residential life of older students who were used to greater freedom and anonymity. Program directors accepted the need for early—sometimes instantaneous—interventions. But they turned this need into an opportunity by encouraging the students to set rules that governed concerns that ranged from children, alcohol, dogs, and cohabitation to noise and smoking. Rules, students learned, could help to reduce program stress. The student-set rules varied in their initial rigidity, but all programs gravitated towards a comfortable mean. Students learned that, in the dorms, as in class, successful collaborative efforts were rewarded.

Community-building also took advantage of the Hawthorne effect—the "guinea pig" status of students in widely-observed experiments. Students assumed partial responsibility for the success of a risky collaboration between themselves and the colleges, between students from different institutions, and between the institutions themselves. The inevitable mistakes were forgiven, and students worked together to correct errors. Student ownership and group solidarity, directors concluded, were essential, mutually reinforcing program goals.

Peer counselors constantly reassured students that they were individuals, not statistics, that transfer was an attainable goal, and that the program was not a dead end. Counselors mediated between authority and students. Most counselors were students who had transferred into the host four-year college, but directors agreed that their ranks should include program alumni who transferred elsewhere lest students conclude that the programs were really recruitment devices for the host institutions. Programs should include peer counselors in governance decisions to take advantage of close relationships—some programs featured a 4:1 student/staff ratio—between students and counselors. Counselor training should emphasize the stressful moments of the program cycle and cultivate a desire for achievement that will increase motivation and reduce stress. The Vassar program had included many students who later embarked upon teaching careers, a result that may be attributable to peer counselor and faculty member mentorship.

How did programs deal with racial issues? The most successful programs assumed that racism, sexism, and classism are facts of campus life, addressed these issues in the classroom, and coordinated their curricula and

extracurricula. Some faculty members discussed racial conflict in their courses and showed that minorities and the working class had histories. Students learned when they saw themselves in the textbooks. One program reduced racial tension by showing that poorer white students are not the enemy of black students. Faculty members must examine their own possible biases and understand the potential consequences of their teaching. Where majority students will often be adrift if asked what it means to be white or black, or male or female, minority students will answer.

The five programs also prepared peer counselors to deal with racism. Counselors learned that students are anxious to express concerns through dialogue and learning. The counselors avoided punitive measures but encouraged group members to tell violators to end offensive behavior. Peer counselors—as well as faculty members—could use commonalities such as age, gender, and parental status, to reduce racial tension. Coordinated classroom and residential efforts may lead students to perceive the transfer program as neutral turf and to see fellow students as individuals with stories about racial, class, and gender barriers. This perception maximizes academic productivity and facilitates a constructive social environment. Here, as elsewhere, the summer programs generated insights that four-year colleges should employ during the year.

Race could divide students, but coordinated teaching and support activities could overcome these divisions and foster group solidarity. Students saw their removal from the division of labor into the residence hall environment as an opportunity to reflect on their lives, to share life experiences, and take responsibility for fellow students. The residential component answered a student need to discuss personal and academic issues outside the classroom.

A residential college experience may be necessary to encourage transfer even if the reality of a four-year college is less intense. Transfer students will not always be dorm residents, and nonresidential programs should devise ways of eliciting group solidarity and student ownership—and especially of providing the mentorship that peer counselors offered in residential programs.

5. Follow-up. Most student participants were still a year away from transfer to a four-year college when they finished their summer programs. Substantial follow-up activities are required to assure that the participants transfer, but there is disagreement on who is responsible for that follow-up and on what activities are most efficacious.

Much of the responsibility, program directors concurred, fell by default to the four-year colleges, which were actually less well-equipped to perform this role. Directors reported difficulties in tracking program participants from a distance. These directors kept in some touch with community college counterparts, but mainly relied on alumni office techniques: reunions, newsletters, "class agents," and occasionally shaming students into keeping in touch. These techniques worked well among students whose bonding resulted in mutual reinforcement of the transfer goal or who had developed a strong motivation to transfer. But community colleges need to play a more active follow-up role among the other participants.

Future program planning must envision a continued partnership between two- and four-year colleges to deal with the follow-up issue. Continued collaboration will permit a salutary division of labor; four-year colleges will view the graduates of each program as a "class," while community colleges will view their students in that class as part of their transfer cohort. Four-year colleges should maximize "follow-up" activities that occur before students depart for home: transcript evaluation, course counseling, and perhaps even fall registration. The community colleges should consider a transfer club that targets non-accepted students. Combining follow-up and recruitment activities for the following year may reinforce the motivation of program graduates.

Should four-year colleges confine themselves to one community college partner to maximize follow-up collaboration? This limitation may strengthen dual student identification that may facilitate transfer and may facilitate contacts between officials at two- and four-year colleges. But it may retard the ability of the four-year college to recruit an optimal class and may reduce diversity. And, the practice may not accomplish the goal if the two-year college is composed of multiple campuses.

In planning follow-up activities, administrators at both two- and four-year colleges should note the findings of *The Transfer Challenge*. Successful transfer programs require a comprehensive approach: academic, financial, and vocational counseling, and adequate support services, including a writing center, a career center, and transfer advisers. A transfer office—even if it is more than a wall of catalogues and a computer bank—cannot do the job by itself. The extensive CCP follow-up program included a diploma ceremony for STEP graduates, a congratulatory letter to each graduate, and a suggested second-

year program that aimed at transfer.

Two-year college faculty members who participated in the summer programs can advise program graduates—a formidable task since most participants must rethink their second-year programs when they return to their studies in the fall. Four-year college faculty participants help participants who transfer to that college. Their success as advisers will increase as they learn the curricula of community colleges.

6. Planning. *The Transfer Challenge* noted three desiderata for successful transfer programs: commitment, comprehensiveness, and institutionalization. Program directors noted a high level of administrator, student, and faculty commitment to these multifaceted programs, but they expressed concern about their inability to institutionalize them. These programs, directors noted, required substantial amounts of time and money. They suggested that the programs have assured funding for three years before they are launched. Unless external agencies fund these programs, they are likely to become recruitment vehicles for the host college and therefore evaluated by their benefits to the institution, not to the students.

7. Reflections. Program participants identified three signature aspects of these summer programs: the design of innovative, team-taught courses, the formation of peer groups that sustained students through program stress and through transfer preparation once back at the two-year college, and the confrontation of difficult racial and other social issues in the curriculum and the extracurriculum. Participants uniformly reported a high level of intellectual, administrative, and emotional investment in these programs and commensurately high levels of personal satisfaction.

Participants had many suggestions for fine-tuning their programs: streamlining the admissions process, preparing admittees for the summer program, maximizing administrative support, recruitment of faculty, pairing team-teachers, designing an integrated curriculum and extracurriculum, strengthening support services, facilitating peer group development and bonding, improving residential accommodations, confronting problems raised by older, poorer, and minority students as they in turn confront a new environment, generating publicity, better articulating the program's goals, and taking steps to link the program to transfer activities on the two-year college campus during the next academic year.

But the need for fine-tuning,

directors noted, does not detract from the initial success of the five programs. The transformational value of these student-centered programs makes them worthy of further experiment. One student wrote of her experience:

> The learning was much more intense and in-depth than anything I've experienced before. The exchange of ideas and thoughts in class and out was great. I learned with and from everybody else, instead of just memorizing information for tests....I feel so strongly about this program and all the people I've met here that it's hard to put my feelings in words. I really feel like I can do anything and deal with anyone now. I've never had so many people care about me and like me and appreciate me. I've only known them for five weeks, but we feel like life-long friends. It makes me sick when I think I might not have gotten the chance to experience this. I'll always be grateful.

At a time when critics question the outcomes produced by American higher education, these programs require careful nurture.

Harold Wechsler
University of Rochester
August, 1991